BIOS 215: Biosciences Lab Teaching Syllabus Spring 2021

MEETING TIME AND LOCATION

Whole class meetings will be either in the lab or through Zoom in Canvas. Face-to-face location will be in the BioSciences teaching lab in Anderson Biological Laboratories (ABL) 126. Time will vary depending on which laboratory section the participant leads.

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Beth Beason-Abmayr (**bbeason@rice.edu (mailto:bbeason@rice.edu)**): ABL 126 (lab); office hours will be conducted using Zoom – please email me to make an appointment (I will email you the link). When you arrive for remote office hours, you will be directed to the waiting room; please be patient as I may be meeting with another student.

I am conducting a study looking at teaching and learning. The purpose of this study is to determine the factors that influence teaching effectiveness and learning. Your participation in this study will last for the duration of the current semester and will entail activities no different from the regular activities you would otherwise engage in as part of the course. If you would like more information, please do not hesitate to ask. *If you would like to opt out of the study, please talk to Dr. Beason as soon as possible.*

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

BIOS 215 is an opportunity to learn and practice important skills related to teaching and professional behavior while assisting experienced faculty with laboratory instruction and feedback to students. It is also an opportunity to provide leadership by example to other teaching assistants and students in our laboratory courses. Overall learning goals and intended learning outcomes for teaching assistants are outlined below.

Goal 1: Recognize the importance of timely attention to responsibilities

We rely heavily on teaching assistants to provide our undergraduates the best possible laboratory experience. Timely feedack to individual students is particularly important, as it is through such feedback that they learn how to improve. Failure to meet these responsibilities can negatively impact a student's grade. A responsible teaching assistant

- shows up on time for lab
- posts individual feedback on notebook pages no later than midnight, five days past the relevant lab session
- provides the instructor with immediate weekly feedback on individual student performance
- responds to instructor queries and requests for information (usually sent by email) within 24 hours
- anticipates personal issues (e.g., illness or rescheduled classes or interviews) and makes arrangements with instructor to ensure that responsibilities are met

Goal 2: Understand how quality instruction and feedback can improve student performance

A successful learning experience is far more likely when observant and interactive teaching assistants provide timely and effective instruction and feedback. An effective teaching assistant

- interacts proactively with students in the lab rather than waiting for them to take the initiative
- guides students with regard to laboratory safety
- provides individual performance comments, both orally and written, that reflect substantive constructive feedback
- engages students when answering questions and providing instruction
- handles conflicts effectively
- takes the necessary initiatives to ensure fairness by, for example, working with other TAs to ensure that grading criteria are consistent from one TA to another and one lab section to another
- interacts with students in a professional manner, treating all of them equally with courtesy and respect

Goal 3: Recognize the necessity of teamwork in mentoring and in assessing student performance

Teamwork is essential to the successful realization of all of these goals. A teaching assistant who is a good team player

- contributes to discussions about experimental procedures
- posts queries and responds to queries about grading criteria and/or laboratory procedures when appropriate and/or necessary
- takes the initiative to refresh past understanding of methods, procedures, explanations, and theory
- promotes mastery of the material covered by the course by regularly communicating with one another
- shares specific observations and experiences with the rest of the team
- when necessary, picks up responsibilities of other TAs who are unable to carry them out
- readily handles an emergency or hazardous situation in the instructor's absence

REQUIRED EXPERIENCE

Participation in this course is by permission of instructor only and is based on performing well in the associated laboratory course (BIOC/BIOS 311, BIOC/BIOS 313, or BIOC 112/FWIS 115) in a prior semester.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Teaching assistant (TA) responsibilities differ depending on which laboratory course the student is leading. Examples of responsibilities include setting up/cleaning up the lab, demonstrating procedures, interacting with individual students, grading laboratory notebooks, answering questions both inside and outside of class, and evaluating student lab performance.

The instructor will meet with the TAs for a particular course at least once a week throughout the semester. At the beginning of the semester, the instructor will set a meeting day and time based on the schedules of the TAs. Several times throughout the semester, the instructor will meet with ***all*** of the TAs so they can share challenges and success stories for a particular course.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Attendance at all laboratory meetings and performing all duties required of the associated laboratory course are essential. Absences can be excused due to illness or unexpected/unavoidable emergencies; students are expected to contact the instructor as soon as possible in the event of an emergency.

Students are expected to wear proper attire to lab, including closed-toe shoes and knee-length clothing, and to use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) as instructed. Additionally, they must adhere to safety guidelines when working in the lab.

PARTICIPATION

- TAs are expected to be actively engaged in the classroom. If you are joining class remotely, please keep your video camera on and microphone muted. Use the [chat, raise hand, unmute, etc.] when you have questions or would like to participate. Students needing an accommodation for using their camera or microphone should contact me at the beginning of the semester to discuss and work out needed adjustments.
- TAs should set up regular office hours through Zoom in Canvas - you may want to poll the class at the beginning of the semester to find out good days/times to meet; when major assignments are due you may want to schedule additional meeting times
- Use screen-share software, Google docs, Zoom breakouts, portable white boards, etc. if you need to view other students' work.
- Online discussions and activities are an integral portion of the course. You may be asked to engage in an offline dialogue with colleagues throughout each session as indicated in session directions.
- Active engagement is an essential component of the learning process. Participation in this lab course includes active reading and discussion within online forums and class activities during the week. TAs are expected to log into the course at the scheduled time, monitor course discussions, and engage as appropriate for the course several times a session.

TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

- Students must have a working computer with a video camera, speaker and a microphone, and a working internet connection that allows them to be on video. Students should test their equipment before joining class. Undergraduate students should contact the Dean of Undergraduates if they have concerns about meeting this requirement.
- If your computer/phone has no webcam/microphone, which may be needed to complete some assignments, please let me know as soon as possible and contact the Dean of Undergraduates if you need to request support via the Access and Opportunity Portal (**HTTPS://AOP.RICE.EDU/APPLICATION (https://aop.rice.edu/application)**).

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Evaluation of student performance will be based on attending laboratory meetings and performing required duties responsibly and effectively. You are expected to prepare for class and lab meetings. Throughout the semester, Reflections will be submitted in Canvas. There will be no required exams or papers. Course may be repeated for credit.

HONOR CODE POLICY

Teaching assistants (TAs) are expected to observe and maintain the Rice Honor Code in all of their lab-associated activities both inside and outside of class. TAs are expected to familiarize themselves with the Honor Code Policy for a specific lab course and to ask the instructor for clarification of any parts that are confusing or unclear. If a BIOS 215 student suspects a violation of the Honor Code for the lab course, she should submit a letter of accusation, along with all relevant evidence, to **honor@rice.edu (mailto:honor@rice.edu)** as soon as possible; if she would like to remain anonymous she may describe the incident to the instructor, who will then submit the accusation.

PRIVACY and CONFIDENTIALITY

- In line with **FERPA REQUIREMENTS (https://registrar.rice.edu/facstaff/ferpa_FAQs/)** , recorded classroom discussions involving students will be available only to students officially registered and enrolled in the class. If you have concerns about appearing on these recordings, please contact me ahead of time.
- I may desire or plan to use recordings from this class for another educational purpose. If this situation arises, and in line with **FERPA REQUIREMENTS (https://registrar.rice.edu/facstaff/ferpa_FAQs/)** , I will ask you to consider signing individualized consent **FORMS (https://registrar.rice.edu/sites/g/files/bxs751/f/Lecture_Capture_Consent-Release.pdf)** . Students who do not provide written consent will be de-identified and/or omitted from all recordings.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Course material will be delivered digitally (online or email) or in book format and may be visual (written documents, slides, videos, etc.), audio (videos, presentations, discussions), or interactive (questions, discussions, clickers, etc.). Course work will require answering questions online, recording entries in an electronic lab notebook, typing papers, reading written materials, discussing material with peers,

Any student with a documented or suspected disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations should 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Disability Resource Center (Allen Center, Room 111 / **adarice@rice.edu** (mailto:adarice@rice.edu) / x5841) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) *meet with the instructor in person or by email before the first day of class* to discuss your accommodation needs – all discussions will remain confidential.

TITLE IX RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYEE NOTIFICATION

Rice University cares about your wellbeing and safety. Rice encourages any student who has experienced an incident of harassment, pregnancy discrimination or gender discrimination or relationship, sexual, or other forms interpersonal violence to seek support through The SAFE Office. Students should be aware when seeking support on campus that most employees, including myself, as the instructor/TA, are required by Title IX to disclose all incidents of non-consensual interpersonal behaviors to Title IX professionals on campus who can act to support that student and meet their needs. For more information, please visit **safe.rice.edu** (http://safe.rice.edu/) or **email titleixsupport@rice.edu** (mailto:titleixsupport@rice.edu) . For more information about Title IX, please contact Title IX Compliance Officer **Richard Baker.** (mailto:richard.a.baker@rice.edu)

DEAN OF UNDERGRADUATES GUIDELINES FOR RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

Both Rice's policy of non-discrimination on the basis of religion and our core values of diversity and inclusion require instructors to make reasonable accommodations to help students avoid negative academic consequences when their religious obligations conflict with academic requirements. Every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. You are obligated to provide me with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which you will be absent.

Information contained in this course syllabus, other than the absence policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.